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ABSTRACT

SYSTEM IMPERILED, a game simulating the basic features of the "balance of power, focuses on the power relationships among states in an international system. Primary activities of the game are the exchange of power units, formation of alliances, and making war and peace. Role-playing is not specifically built into the game, although it may be introduced. Two basic structures of the international system are suggested, but this too may be altered to meet the need of the class. The game is easy to direct and play, and may be run during a single class period. This publication contains the necessary elements for playing the game; a director's (teacher's) guide, copies of participant rules, samples of the forms to be used by participants, and readings entitled "Balance of Power and "Changes in the International System Since 1945." (Author/GC)

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SYSTEM IMPERILED!

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SØ 003 103

SYSTEM IMPERILED! is a game simulating the basic features of the Balance of Power, focusing on the power relationships among states. The primary activities of the game are the exchange of power units, formation of alliances, and making of war and peace. Role-playing is not specifically built into the game, although it may be introduced by the director, if desired. Two basic structures of the international system are suggested, but this, too, may be altered to meet the needs of the class. The game is easy to direct and play, and may be run during a single class period, if desired. This kit includes a Director's Guide and master copies of the Participant Rules, Forms, and readings on the Balance of Power and Changes in the International System Since 1945.

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INTRODUCTION TO DIRECTOR'S GUIDE

A teaching simulation is a game based on a theoretical model, in this case a model of the power relationships among nation-states. The model used here is a systems model, focusing on the behavioral relationships among states in an international system. The system used in any particular game may be the Balance of Power, a Bi-Polar or multi-polar system, or any other historical or hypothetical system, depending on the individual teacher's requirements. Whatever power distribution is used, however, the students will be exposed to several basic features of the nation-states system.

Three basic systemic features are particularly important. First, that there exists no authoritative structure for the resolution of conflict in the international system. Each nation-state is completely dependent on its own resources--military and diplomacic--for survival. Each state, therefore, can be expected to act in its own self-interest. Any of your students who do not realize this fundamental fact may find themselves reduced to a powerless position very quickly. Secondly, that influence is basically commensurate with power. Although a state's power is not entirely restricted to the military sphere, military might remains the most important single factor, and must be taken into consideration.

The third basic feature is that as states act in their own self-interest, they will attempt to oppose the aggrandizement of any one state or group of states which might endanger the system. Thus, they will move to increase their own power, form competing power blocs, or go to war against the threatening state or group of states.

This game was developed in response to a felt need for a simulation of basic features of the international system which would be neither so complex or so expensive that it would be beyond the reach of many teachers for use in the classroom. All material used in the game may be duplicated on equipment found in any school from master copies provided in the kit. Readings on two international systems are provided as enrichment material to follow the debriefing sessions. Although simple in design, the game will provide a wealth of experience for debriefing in the areas of international politics, alternative strategies that the players may adopt, and the internal politics of deciding on policy.

To say that the game is simple in design, however, does not mean that it may be undertaken without adequate preparation, on the part of the teacher or students. The teacher must become thoroughly familiar with the Director's Guide and the Participant Rules, prepare all materials, and carefully think through the simulation before entering into the experience with his students. Advance preparation of the students through study and discussion of the rules and procedures also contributes significantly to the success of the simulation.

The educational value of simulation in the classroom has not been specifically established, but some of the following benefits may be expected: first, the simulation may help to motivate your students through participation in a new learning experience, exposure to novel situations, and experiences they would not otherwise encounter. Such exposure will also promote empathy with decision-makers and some of the constraints facing decision-makers. It may also help them to integrate material from other sources with their simulation experience and with the simulation model. Simulation can also be used to promote inquiry into situations which arise during the course of the game. It is hoped that students and teacher alike will find the simulation an enlightening and profitable experience.

SYSTEM IMPERILED!

Director's Guide:

Purpose of the Game: To teach the basic policy goal of all countries (survival), and the workings of the Balance of Power.

The game can be played with from five to ten countries, of two to four players each. More than three players per country, or more than seven countries, however, can get to be unwieldy.

Power ratios: 8; 8; 7; 5; 5; 4; 3, or whatever variation you wish to use. There should be some fairly large countries, and some fairly small countries, with a few in-between. Force Capabilities (FC's) may be allotted in multiples of the base numbers of 5, 10, 15, 20, or whatever is desired. The larger the capabilities, however, the longer the game will run. A multiple of 10 works well.

Countries may trade or take in Reparations up to 50% of the FC's available to the trading country at the time that the exchange takes place.

Annual growth factor: 20% of the FC's available at the beginning of the last period.

Primary Inter-nation activities: Aid, Alliance, War.

Goal of the Game: Survival.

War: War may occur at any time in the system, and may be undertaken by any country against any other. A nation may commit any number of FC's to war against another country, provided that by doing so, they do not fall below the minimum survival level of 10 FC's. Destructive power of one FC: one (1) FC.

Peace: May be made on any terms agreeable to the parties involved, subject to the above limitations.

A country automatically surrenders if it does not respond to an attack within ten minutes of being notified. The attacker then dictates terms, again subject to the above limitations.

a. Occupation may occur only if a country is reduced to 10 FC's following an attack and is unable to obtain aid or engage the attacker in peace negotiations within ten minutes. If this happens, the country has been defeated and decision-making for that country <u>may be</u> taken over by the country or alliance which won the war.

b. Occupied countries continue to receive growth increments which may be used by the occupying country(ies) as they see fit. Occupying countries, however, lose one-half of their own growth increments as occupation costs, as long as the occupation continues.

c. Occupation may be ended by agreement between the countries involved, or by outside pressure on the occupying country.

Forms: Force Commitment Form, Exchange Record, and the Inter-Nation Agreement Form

Periods: Thirty minutes each, each representing one year. There may be any number of periods in the game, but should have at least three or four.

Advance Preparation:

You will need about 50 copies of theForce Commitment Form, and 75 copies of the Exchange Record and the Inter-Nation Agreement Form.

Prepare country tags for all participants. These may be made of colored construction paper, one color for each country. The country may then be called by the color of their tags. If you have more countries than colors, it may also be necessary to cut the tags into different shapes (squares, triangles, circles) so that each country will have a distinctive tag.

The students should be grouped so that at least one fairly sharp and active student is in each group. This arrangement provides insurance against 'dropout' countries.

Prepare and duplicate a War Notice something like the one illustrated. It is not necessary, but will save time during the game.

WAR NOTICE

To:_____

You have been attacked with _____FC's by _____(nation) as of _____(time). You have ten minutes from the above time to respond to the attack or initiate peace negotiations.

Be sure to subtract your war losses before considering a response.

Signed,

(Game Director)

To help with debriefing, you may find it helpful to prepare transparency copies of Form C. By using colored grease pencils, green for a defensive action, red for an offensive action, and black for an exchange of a neutral nature, you can keep a record of system activity which can be projected onto a screen during debriefing.

During the game:

Keep a tabulation on the front board of changes in FC's, as indicated:

Country:	Red	White	Black	Green	Blue	Yellow	Orange	etc.
Period 1:	80	80	70	60	50	50	40	
less:	40 (war)							
plus:	20 (aid)							
end of Per.:	60							
growth:	16 (20% of 80)							
Period 2:	76							

It is extremely helpful to have one reliable student keeping a running tabulation of all FC changes (War, trade, etc.) during each period on a worksheet. At the end of the period, the inter-period calculations can then be made and posted in about five minutes. In addition, having a student to act as messenger for the director is extremely useful.

De-Briefing:

Review the development of the system with the students, and draw out the reasons for any alliances and counter-alliances that were made. If the game develops as it should, when constructed without any 'superpowers,' there will probably be at least one instance of one country or alliance moving to dominate the system and being countered by an alliance of other countries formed to prevent such an occurrence. There may even be instances of countries switching alliance groups.

If the game is played only once, draw out during the debriefing what might have happened if one or two of the countries were strong enough to dominate from the beginning, and/or there had been a strong ideological conflict introduced into the game.

Follow-up:

1. Have the students read "The Balance of Power" and re-evaluate the game in light of the historical evidence.

2. If you have time, play the game again, with these changes in the rules: One-third of the countries should be told that they are Communist, one-third that they are Capitalist (or Democratic), and the remaining third that they are neutralist. The neutralist countries should all be of the middle to lower range of power capabilities. The two largest countries should be divided between Capitalist and Communist. In addition, the two largest countries should have power ratios of 12 (U.S.) and 10 (USSR), rather than 8 and 8. Capitalist countries may not ally with Communist countries and vice-versa. Neutralist countries may ally with either or both.

3. After de-briefing the second playing of the game, follow-up with "Changes in the International System since 1945," and draw out the ways in which the game did and did not reflect characteristics of the international system today.

INTRODUCTION FOR PARTICIPANTS

SYSTEM IMPERILED! is a game which simulates the international system of nation-states. That is, in playing the game, you will be acting as a decision-maker in one of the countries in the game. You will not be assigned a specific role (President, Defense Minister, etc.), but rather will make and carry out decisions in whatever manner you and your fellow countrymen see fit.

A simulation is based on a theoretical model, which is an attempt to represent reality in simplified form by centering our interest on a few basic variables, or factors, which we believe are important. In SYSTEM IMPERILED!, the basic variable is power. Each of the countries in the game is assigned a number of power units which are then used in trade, aid, alliance commitments, war, etc. The way in which you use your power units depends on the decisions that you make and upon decisions made by your possible allies and enemies.

In addition to power, the game will simulate the real world in a number of other ways: diplomacy, strategy, and internal struggles for power, to mention a few. These additional variables, however, are not written into the game, but are supplied by you, the participant. In acting in this way, you will learn about the real world from the point of view of a national decision-maker.

All simulations, including this one, are based on certain fundamental assumptions--ideas which we take for granted but cannot prove to be true. The explicit assumption of this simulation is that considerations of power and self-interest are the basic factors which lie behind the actions of nation-states in our international system. That is, we are saying that when a nation's vital interests (such as, survival) are at stake, considerations of morality, humanitarianism, and law have a much lower priority than the use of power. In addition, all simulations assume a basic similarity in all human behavior, at least within Western civilization. We assume, for example, that all national leaders, as well as yourselves, will be competitive and will not meekly submit to domination by another state; that you and they will take similar actions when faced with similar circumstances. After playing the game, to the extent that you are able to draw parallels between your experience and the real world, you will be demonstrating the truth of that assumption.

The game will be played in a number of "simulation periods" of about thirty minutes each, and will be controlled by your teacher, who will give you the information that you need during the game. Each period represents about six months of calendar time, which means that you will have to act quickly and decisively, requirements which often face national decision-makers.

The other rules of the game are short and concise and can be learned easily through study and by playing the game. Your teacher can provide clarification and interpretation, and is the final judge on disputes concerning the rules.

SYSTEM IMPERILED!

Participant Rules:

1. Countries may have from two to four players each. Decisions must be taken by a majority of the members of the country.

2. The primary activities of the game are giving aid, making alliances, and waging war.

3. FC (Force Commitment): The basic unit of military force (such as men, tanks, planes, ships) used in the game.

4. Your country will be assigned a number of FC's at the beginning of the game. At the beginning of each period, you will receive a "growth" increment of 20% of the amount of FC's you had at the beginning of the last period.

5. The game will be played in a number of thirty (30) minute periods.

6. In war, you may commit any number of FC's to war against another country, or give any number of FC's in aid to another country, subject to the limitation expressed in Rule 7 (E).

7. Rules of War:

   A. A war may be ended through surrender or signing a peace agreement.

   B. Peace may be made on any terms agreeable to the parties involved, subject to the limitations in rules E and F.

   C. A country automatically surrenders if it does not respond to an attack within ten minutes of being notified that war exists. The attacker then dictates terms, again subject to the limitations in rules E and F. The time limit does not apply while peace negotiations are in progress.

   D. 1) Occupation may occur only if a country is reduced to 10 FC's following an attack and is unable to obtain aid or engage the attacker in peace negotiations within ten minutes. If this happens, the country has been defeated and decision-making for that country may be taken over by the country or alliance which won the war.

      2) Occupied countries continue to receive growth increments which may be used by the occupying country(ies) as they see fit. Occupying countries, however, lose one-half of their own growth increments as occupation costs, as long as the occupation continues.

      3) Occupation may be ended by agreement between the countries involved, or by outside pressure on the occupying country.

   E. No country may exchange or make a war commitment of FC's which would leave that country with less than 10 FC's.

Participant Rules (continued)

F. Reparations may be taken by a winning country or alliance after a war, of up to fifty percent (50%) of the FC's belonging to the losing country or countries at the end of the war. If this exchange of reparations causes the losing country to fall to ten FC's, Rule D applies.

8. Whenever you make a trade or want to go to war, fill out the appropriate form and take it to the game director. He will record the change and notify the country you are attacking, if that is the case.

9. Record the terms of an alliance or a peace agreement under "terms of agreement" on the Inter-Nation Agreement Form.

10. Designate one person in your country to communicate with the Director, and one person to carry on negotiation with other countries. There should always be at least one person at country headquarters.

FORCE COMMITMENT FORM

Submit one FCF for each action undertaken

Attacking Nation_____

Target Nation_____

No. of FC's committed_____

Is this action Offensive _____or Defensive_____?

Is this action part of a war in which you are allied with other nations? If so, with whom?

Signed: _____ of _____

Time: _____ Period _____

Form A

EXCHANGE RECORD

Record all trades of Force Capability on this form

_____FC's from _____ to _____.

_____FC's from _____ to _____.

_____FC's from _____ to _____.

Signed:

_____ of _____.

_____ of _____.

_____ of _____.

Indicate one:

Alliance Commitment_____ Aid_____

Reparations_____ Loan_____

Period _____ Time_____

Form B1

INTER-NATION AGREEMENT FORM

Period:_____ Time:_____

Terms of Agreement:

Signed:

_____(Decision-Maker) of_____(nation)

_____ " " of_____ "

_____ " " of_____ "

_____ " " of_____ "

Note: Any exchange of FC's involved in this agreement must be indicated on an Exchange Record at the time the exchange is to take place. The Director will not carry out the provisions of this agreement. Execution of agreements must be by the parties to the agreement.

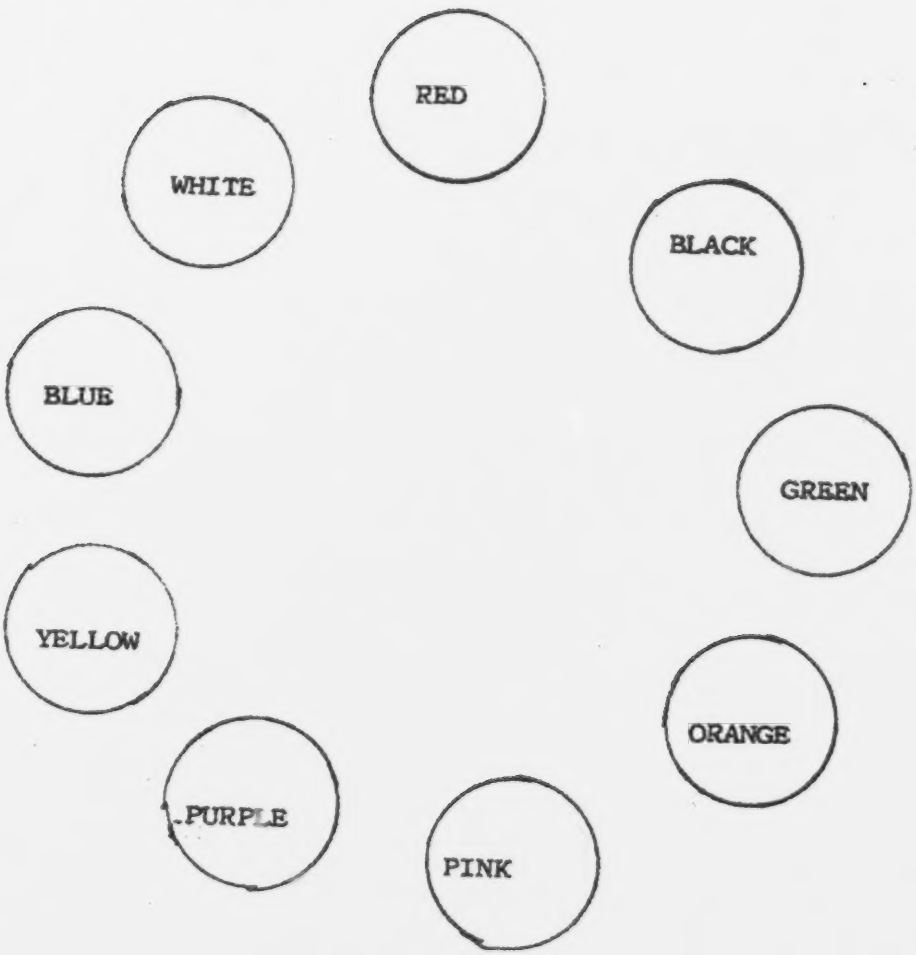
Form B2

Black Aid

-------- Alliance

_____ Act of War
Red Offensive
Green Defensive

Period _____



Form C

THE BALANCE OF POWER

> "The excessive aggrandizement of one may mean the ruin and subjection of all the other neighbors....attention to the maintenance of a kind of equality and equilibrium between the neighboring states is what assures peace for all."
>
> --Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambrai, ca. 1713.

The above statement is not a perfect description of the Balance of Power, but it does illustrate one of the fundamental conditions necessary for the operation of the Balance of Power: a reasonable equality of the distribution of power. In addition, several other conditions must be met for the Balance of Power system to exist. The first is the existence of clearly defined, independent, stable, yet interrelated units. The national states which make up the system must be free to make their own policy decisions and must be stable internally. A civil war, for example, would seriously reduce the government's ability to follow an independent course in foreign policy. The states in the system must also be interrelated--the existence of the system depends on the actions of all states.

The second additional requirement is that there must not be any overwhelming external threat to the system. Such a threat would cause the system members to unit in opposition, ending the balancing arrangements within the system. Lastly, there must be general agreement on the basic rules of Balance of Power politics; otherwise, the member states will not be able to interact freely.

When the above conditions are basically met, member states will be free to form alliances on the basis of immediate interest and power considerations. They will not be bound to an alliance based on ideology or domination by a much more powerful nation.

One basic rule of the system is that a state should ally against any state which threatens to become dominant. Allowing any state to become dominant violates the requirement for broad distribution of power within the system and places the survival of all system members in jeopardy. An alliance with a dominant leader such as Napoleon, Hitler, or Stalin, for example, would not mean a share in the spoils, but rather a subordinate position in his empire.

During much of the four centuries prior to the rise of the United States to major power status after World War I, the more powerful European countries worked to preserve their existence through the balancing of power arrangements within the system. England often took the lead in the balancing process by throwing her weight to the weaker side in any threatening situation. England opposed, for example, efforts at empire-building on the part of Louis XIV (1643-1715) and Napoleon (1799-1814) of France, and by Hitler (1933-45) in Germany. The states which made up the international system during most of this period were England, France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia (by 1871 Prussia had been successful in uniting all of Germany under Prussian leadership). Italy was added to the system in 1866.

Diplomatic flexibility was a characteristic of the Balance of Power system during much of the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1756, for example, the Powers of Europe carried out a "Diplomatic Revolution" wherein they all changed allies. Until 1748, England had been allied with Austria against France and Prussia. By 1756, just prior to the Seven Years War (French and Indian War), England and Austria had parted company, and the new alignment had England siding with Prussia against France and Austria. Such a "Diplomatic Revolution'would be difficult today because of ideology and the manner in which power is distributed in the world.

The Balance of Power system worked fairly well during the 18th and 19th centuries. That does not mean, however, that the world knew two hundred years of peace. The basic goal of the balance system is the survival of its members, and war is often used as a means of adjustment in the system. A general war, such as World Wars I and II, involving fairly rigid alliance systems in a life and death struggle, must be guarded against because it threatens the existence of many system members. More limited warfare, however, can be used to adjust minor imbalances and preserve general stability within the system.

Any continuing violation of one of the basic requirements of the system can be taken as evidence that the Balance of Power as a system has been displaced by a different arrangement of states in international politics. Thus, the rise of the United States to a position of dominance at the end of World War II violated the requirement for a reasonably equal distribution of power. The subsequent rise of the Soviet Union to superpower status and the extreme ideological division between East and West also violated the requirement for general agreement on the basic rules of international politics. Today, therefore, we no longer have a Balance of Power, but instead a much different type of international system.

CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM SINCE 1945

Since 1945, the structure of the international political system has changed in several important ways, many of which make the operation of a Balance of Power system impossible. Briefly, the changes include 1) the appearance of two powerful groupings of states, each held together by a strong ideological bond; 2) the development and spread of nuclear weapons; and 3) the addition of over seventy-five (75) new nations to the international community.

The development, immediately after the second world war, of two strongly opposed ideological groupings, violates the Balance of Power requirement that all states agree on the basic rules of international existence. These two groupings, or "blocs," are those of Communism, led by the Soviet Union, and Western Liberalism, led by the United States. Since 1947, the two have engaged in a virtual "cold war," which was most intense during the 1947 to 1953 period and did not significantly subside until the early 1960's. The most recent major developments were the crises over Berlin in 1961 and Cuba in 1962.

The reason that the violation of the requirement of agreement on basic rules is important is that the introduction of ideology into the system prevents the free alliance of states which belong to different blocs and forces the alliance of states which belong to the same bloc. The only policy choice which can be made is that of which bloc to join, and frequently even this choice is absent. As examples, Britain and West Germany must ally with the United States because they cannot, or do not wish to, ally with the Soviet Union. Canada may not form an alliance with Poland because they already belong to opposing coalitions, namely NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Cuba joined the Communist Bloc partially out of a desire to escape American domination, but as a member of the Communist world, Cuba is no longer free to develop military relations with any of the NATO countries.

The second major change which has occurred since 1945 is the introduction of nuclear weapons into the world. Today one aircraft or one missile carries more destructive power than was expended by both sides during all of World War II. Both the United States and the Soviet Union are capable of inflicting totally unacceptable damage on the other within a matter of minutes. This capability for mass destruction has brought about the strategic military concept of "nuclear deterrence:" war is avoided through the assurance that either side can inflict unacceptable damage on the other in case of an attack. The strategy of deterrence is believed to be workable only as long as each side maintains its capability to destroy the other. Both the Americans and the Soviets must, therefore, continue to improve their weapons and defenses to be certain that the other does not gain a clear advantage which would make possible "victory without retaliation."

The existence of nuclear weapons rules out the use of war between the U.S. and the USSR as a means of maintaining Balance of Power stability. Conflicts between the two superpowers must be worked out by other means, including smaller wars in small countries, economic competition, propaganda, etc. The existence of these

new weapons makes war between smaller countries (such as Egypt and Israel) all the more dangerous because of the possibility of direct American-Russian involvement, or the possibility that one of the smaller countries may obtain and use nuclear weapons, touching off a general nuclear war.

Lastly, and possibly the most important change for the future, has been the emergence of about seventy-five (75) new countries since 1945--countries which have been created out of former colonial empires. These new nations, mostly in Africa and Asia, are very nationalistic, weak, poor, have rapidly expanding populations, and are industrially backward. This combination of factors usually gives rise to a dissatisfied population, making the country very unstable internally. Because of internal instability, several of the new countries have experienced domestic disorder which in turn has often spilled over into the international arena. India, the Congo, Indonesia, and Vietnam are examples of areas which were colonies in 1945 and have experienced violence of worldwide importance since gaining independence.

In general, these new countries reject the western values of their former colonial masters. They form a third force in world politics, and for the most part refuse to ally with either the Soviet Union or the United States. One of the consequences of this situation is that both of the superpowers attempt to gain the favor of the new countries. Being thus able to play both sides against each other, the new countries gain a measure of freedom in forming their own policy far in excess of that which their own military capabilities would justify. They obviously do not meet the Balance of Power requirement for reasonable equality of power with the other states in the system; but because of American-Soviet rivalry, they are able to exert considerable influence on many types of issues, such as the policies of many more powerful nations toward de-colonization and racism. It is, in fact, possible that the new, "have not" countries will one day unite against the older, richer countries in a worldwide conflict much more important than that between Communism and Democracy. Such a development could serve as the basis for yet another new system of international politics.